

# **Linguistic Landscape Analysis of La Plaza de Ponchos in Otavalo, Ecuador**

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## **Abstract**

Using Google Street View, I examine the Linguistic Landscape of La Plaza de Ponchos, an open-air tourist market in Otavalo, Ecuador to understand linguistic attitudes of Kichwa, a language indigenous to the region that was largely suppressed 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish colonialism and later Ecuadorian nation building. I consider the lasting impressions of Spanish colonialism at play with increased globalization and media influence. Through my analysis I look at both bottom-up and top-down signage as a measure of community attitudes towards Kichwa as compared to the linguistically dominant languages English and Spanish. My findings suggest that, as expected, Kichwa does not have a place in settings of commerce as compared to Spanish and English. These results are comparable to other multilingualistic Linguistic Landscape analyses such as those conducted in Friesland, Basque Country, and Israel/Palestine (Cenoz & Gortern, 2006; Ben-Rafael et al. 2008). Later, I evaluate the merits of this study with the knowledge that Google Street View has not been updated since 2014 and that the landscape has since changed, concluding that Otavalo is an example of how rapidly linguistic attitudes can change and how important it is that we as culturally conscious academics devote our attention to this change.

**Key Words:** La Plaza de Ponchos, Otavalo, Kichwa, Linguistic Landscapes

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Linguistic Landscapes

The study of linguistic landscape is a useful tool in understanding multilingual spaces. It analyzes the use of written information in public settings to offer insight into sociolinguistic environments and language attitudes (Rey 2004: 38, Weyers, 2016: 8). Specifically, it is defined as follows:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. The linguistic landscape of a territory can serve two basic functions: an informational function and a symbolic function (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 25).

Image 1, shown below, serves as an example of linguistic landscape. The image depicts a street view of shops and advertisements in Elmhurst, New York, in which there are at least three different languages present.



Image 1: Example of a multilingual landscape found on a busy street in Elmhurst, New York, taken from [http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/~mnewman/Site/QC\\_Linguistic\\_Landscape\\_Project.html](http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/~mnewman/Site/QC_Linguistic_Landscape_Project.html)

In addition to promoting product and brand familiarity, attracting potential customers, and influencing brand image, storefront signage can also “reflect the relative power and status of the different languages in a specific sociolinguistic context” (Antayo 2016: 9, Cenoz & Gortern, 2006: 67). Conversely, linguistic landscapes can also affect the makeup of the sociolinguistic atmosphere by directly influencing the attitudes of those inhabiting the public space and consequently reading the signage. All of this may be compared to official language policy and language attitudes in the surrounding area (Cenoz & Gortern, 2006: 68).

### **1.2 Ecuador as a Case Study**

Landscape analysis can be especially helpful in understanding the linguistic dichotomies of multilingual environments that are present-day continuations of colonialism where racial dominance was assisted by linguistic suppression of native languages. One such country is Ecuador. Though Ecuador’s rich history spans nearly 8,000 years, the linguistic remnants of Spanish colonialism still seen today began during the onset of the colonial period in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. During this time the cultural and linguistic sketches were largely undefinable, as indigenous peoples of the land were not entirely assimilated into the Incan culture, which was the ruling empire of the land at that time. Image 2, shown below, offers a depiction of South American land controlled by the Incan Empire. Unlike their Spanish adversaries, Incan rulers did not impose linguistic, religious, or culture standardizations on their subjects (Torre and Striffler 2008: 9-11).



Image 2: Map of Incan Empire, taken from <https://mesoamericavirtualfieldtrip.weebly.com/inca.html>

The predominating language of the time was Kichwa, a language belonging to the Kichwa indigenous people, that was widely spoken across the empire as a lingua franca not only in Ecuador but throughout a large portion of South America (Torre and Striffler 2008: 15). This commonality assisted Spanish colonizers in their swift takeover.

Spaniards used Kichwa's status to their favor, bringing in translators and clergy to translate the bible into the native language in a successful effort to evangelize the local population and initiate a "whitening" process that still holds social implications today (Katz 2017: 8). This whitening process pushed society towards homogeneity and a system of

Eurocentric ideals and standards, which utilized linguistic homogeneity as a means of dominance and repression of native peoples (Albarracin, 2004: 15). Over time, Spanish became the dominant language and the local population began to assimilate to the Eurocentric culture.

To this day, Kichwa is largely disenfranchised both at the governmental (top-down) and communal (bottom-up) level. There is virtually no support, financially or otherwise, for Kichwa education (Oviedo and Wildemeersch, 2008). The intercultural bilingual education system that did exist was ultimately dissolved in the 1980's (King 2003), and though the 2008 Ecuadorian constitution names Kichwa a language specially designated for intercultural relation purposes and guarantees the right to education in one's own language, there is nonetheless little implementation (Ecuadorian Constitution; Katz 2017: 17-19). The lack of governmental initiative combined with the disenfranchisement of potential Kichwa teachers exacerbates the issue continually (Gallegos-Anda 2016; Martínez Novo & de la Torre 2010; Walsh 2015).

Mercedes Cañamar is an educational leader at Colegio San Rafael, a Spanish/Kichwa bilingual school in a rural area of Otavalo, a small county in the Imbaburra province with one of the highest concentrations of indigenous people in the country (Katz 2017: 14, 17-20). She believes in addition to lack of governmental support, the dearth of Kichwa education is due in part to the low socioeconomic status of the Kichwa people. Kichwa speakers, to her experience, very rarely have the financial resources to seek education or employment opportunities away from their hometowns.

She advocates that the few people who do have the opportunity to further their education cannot financially justify becoming a teacher because the return on investment is so low; teachers in Ecuador are paid approximately 37% less “than labor market participants of similar characteristics” (Liang 2000: 10-13). With that said, Kichwa speakers in rural sectors, who are

largely disenfranchised, cannot make the financial investment to attend school without the guarantee of a financial gain, which is not promised by a teaching position. While public education is provided for free as a governmental service through college, the hidden costs of travel, internet, school supplies, and the various other costs of education put a large financial strain on an already economically struggling community. From my experience living in Otavalo for over a month, it can cost \$4 a day just in transportation costs to take a bus from San Rafael to the University of Otavalo. When the basic cost of living for a family of four is estimated at around \$400 a month, spending \$20 a week in transportation costs alone is nearly impossible.

Señora Cañamar recounted the story of a young Kichwa woman she once knew who lived in a rural, impoverished area approximately 15 miles from the county's university. To avoid the costly bus fare that her family could not afford, she would wake each morning at 2:00 AM and walk to school, partake in her studies, and walk back home by 10:00 PM only to repeat the process again the next morning. This is not an uncommon narrative, and this young woman was fortunate to have a family structure that allowed her to pursue a college education. Cañamar was not surprised when she elected to study architecture, when her heart lay truly in education (Katz 2017: 17). All of this is to say that any teachers who chose to go into Kichwa education are typically not native Kichwa speakers because it is the urban Spanish speakers that have access to education (Tollefson & Tsui 2004: 243).

Another top-down influence is increased globalization and imposition of western culture in Latin America, which is due in large part to the onslaught of western media (Cormack 2013: 255-257; Cunliffe 2003: 133-137; Dixon 1991: 229-256). MacPherson posits that the degradation of indigenous language via media influence has largely to do with the breakdown of

bioecological barriers to intercommunication. The argument that follows has been widely accepted in support of his theory.

...(a) dense vegetation and other natural barriers isolate small linguistic communities; (b) languages and cultures become specialized to deal with small, specialized ecosystems; and, most significantly, (c) these ecosystems do not just keep community members in, they keep colonizers out, and with them their assimilative languages, cultures, education, and economic organizations (2003: 9).

Without community isolation at the hands of natural biological barriers, such as dense plant life, linguistic communities are at risk of being influenced by globally dominant languages. While Indo-European and Chinese languages top the linguistic hierarchy when considering *lingua mundi*, English is perhaps the most linguistically dominant language of them all. (MacPherson 2003: 2, Ushioda & Dornyei 2017: 451, Akteruzzaman & Islam 2017: 197). Sisa Anrango, a Kichwa teacher involved in grassroots language revitalization efforts, makes note of how “*los niños crecen y ven chicas flacas con faldas rosadas*, kids grow up seeing skinny blonde girls in pink skirts,” (Katz 2017: 14, translation) and how these programs contribute to the idealized image of western culture. English is the language of accessibility, more so than Spanish and certainly more so than Kichwa. Mario Cotacachi, a respected Kichwa/Spanish translator, makes note about how the global world does not cater to the indigenous population. Using a computer as an example, he points out how programs are written so that user interfaces are in Spanish, English, French, German, and many other languages with significant global power, but not Kichwa.

The lack of Kichwa in mainstream use largely feeds into bottom up language disintegration, or linguistic suppression at the hands of the speakers themselves (Dorian 2009; Crystal 2000). English is considered the gateway language to the rest of the world (Crystal 2003). It is a status symbol, and the ability to speak or understand it serves as a mechanism of

linguistic stratification whereby businesses and establishments may choose to market their products or services in English, thereby limiting access to those goods to the strictly English-understanding population. English sits firmly on top of the linguistic hierarchy, with Spanish just beneath it and Kichwa, without question, on the bottom (Ovesdotter Alm 2003). Kichwa-speaking parents and grandparents have largely stopped passing the language on to their children. It is considered an unnecessary language in the sense that it is not economically useful, and one that leads to more trouble than it is worth. Even when families do pass on the language, it is kept mostly behind closed doors and not used in public places, especially in places of commerce (Katz 2017, 3).

It is for all these reasons that the town of Otavalo is such an interesting location to consider. Otavalo was not immune to Spanish conquest, but the effects of colonialism are realized in a very stratified way (Collier 1971: 24). In a county with a 60% indigenous population, the perception from the locals themselves is that only 25% of the population speaks Kichwa (El Comercio). There is a clear division between the rural and urban sectors of the county, whereby the way of life in the rural areas relies on agriculture significantly more than the urban population. This is certainly not unique to Otavalo, but the linguistic divide is palpable. There are several factors contributing to the very clear linguistic boundaries, including geographic stratification, grassroots language revitalization efforts, and a large tourist population all playing out in the same place.

One of the main contributing factors to the lack of Kichwa in the urban sectors of Otavalo is the heightened presence of western culture, which is realized in several forms. Where rural sectors do not have access to electricity in the same capacity that the urban population does, urban individuals are met with a daily barrage of western images and cultural impositions. As

there is less western influence in the rural areas of Otavalo, there is less pressure for Eurocentric assimilation and Kichwa is permitted to flourish. However, the contrast is striking once you enter the urban sector, where Western media is abundant. In a country with an extreme culture of waste-not-want-not, these infiltrations of westernized gluttony and English permeations set the stage for the linguistic tensions between English, Spanish, and Kichwa in Otavalo and greater Ecuador.

### **1.3 Complicating the Narrative**

Otavalo is not without its pro-Kichwa activists; grassroots organizations have sprung up in Otavalo which have served as a combative measure against the influences of western media. I will address three of them specifically. Tinkunakuy was initiated about 11 years ago with the original function of providing natural indigenous medicine but has since grown into a private language instruction center. Not only does it seek to provide language education, but cultural education as well because they believe that culture and language are fundamentally intertwined, and that one cannot exist without the other. They serve a wide variety of individuals not just within the Kichwa community; curious tourists often come in; mestizos wanting to learn more about the culture that surrounds them; members of the peace corps that need to communicate with non-bilingual speakers. However, most of the students that do come in seeking education are young adults.

Asociación de Producciones Audiovisuales Kichwas, or APAK, takes a different approach to Kichwa education and seeks to insert the language where it largely does not exist: in the media. APAK produces television programming in both Spanish and Kichwa, including some bilingual programs that specialize in explaining aspects of Kichwa culture in a way that seeks to reach a wider audience than just the Kichwa community. The programs are distributed throughout social

media on a cost-free basis. While financially maintaining this endeavor proves difficult, the goal of breaking down structural barriers that impede access to Kichwa media drives its operators to continue. APAK's work is especially critical as it serves as a mechanism to create new domains in which the language was not previously used. In her paper highlighting social media as a tool for strengthening Zapotec language use, Brook Lillehaugan cites the importance of using language in these new domains in order to keep the language from becoming stigmatized by referencing a 2003 UNESCO report on Language Vitality and Endangerment (2018: 3). The report states that "if the [endangered language speech] communities do not meet the challenges of modernity with their language, it [the language] becomes increasingly irrelevant and stigmatized" (2003: 11). Furthermore, David Crystal writes "an endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology" (2000: 141). By keeping Kichwa in the foreground of modernity via the internet, APAK keeps Kichwa from sliding further into antiquity.

The third endeavor is a joint project between the magazine *Wiñay Kawsay* and radio station Radio Ilumán that, like APAK, both seek to insert Kichwa into spaces where it largely does not exist. Written Kichwa is present yet sparse, and there is largely no standard spelling system (Conejo Arellano 2015: 146). Nonetheless the organization seeks to give socioeconomic value to the language by creating publicly accessible spaces and remind the Kichwa population of their collective cultural knowledge, ancestral practices, festivals, etcetera.

## **2. Focusing on the market**

While Otavalo is the hub of indigenous rights movements in Ecuador (Katz 2017: 5-14), these movements may not be enough to combat the sociolinguistic pressure brought on by mass tourism. Otavalo is home to one of the largest and most attractive tourist destinations on the

continent: La Plaza de Ponchos. A quick Google search of “things to do in Otavalo” leads you instantly to the Trip Advisor site that boasts La Plaza de Ponchos as “colorful Indian market” with little to no mention of its rich history or cultural significance, hailing it as the largest open-air market in South America. Trip Advisor offers tours to the “colorful Indian market [that] takes place each Saturday and features some of the finest woven products in the region including ponchos, sweaters, wall hangings and shawls” (Trip Advisor).

The market itself predates even Incan presence in the country, but it was the Spanish who began to develop it into the globally recognized artisan market that it is today (Korovkin 1997). The Spaniards co-opted the market place, which had originally been a communal hub for buying, selling, and bartering handmade goods, textiles, as well as animals, and turned it into a center for forced indigenous labor whose goods were sold to “colonial mining centers in what is now Peru and Colombia” (Collier 1971; Korovkin 1997: 127). Though Spaniard slavery practices eventually ceased, the market nonetheless remained a center for mass produced textiles and handicrafts.

Today, La Plaza de Ponchos serves as one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in Ecuador. The lively streets bustle with activity every day of the week with vendors fervently peddling their wares, as shown in images 3 and 4. Both foreigners and Ecuadorians alike are attracted to brightly colored ponchos and pottery, textiles and handicrafts. It is worth it to note that most of these “artisanal crafts” are in fact mass produced and can be found in any giftshop across the country. Nonetheless, tourists from all corners of the globe flock to the market to purchase their alpaca-wool scarves, leather handbags, and “hand-painted” wood carvings.



Images 3 and 4: Pictures of handicraft stands in La Plaza de Ponchos, taken from [https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g303848-d4801989-i187844477-Plaza\\_De\\_Los\\_Ponchos\\_Mercado-Otavallo\\_Imbabura\\_Province.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g303848-d4801989-i187844477-Plaza_De_Los_Ponchos_Mercado-Otavallo_Imbabura_Province.html) and <https://www.keteka.com/tours/ecuador-tours/cotacachi-and-otavalo-market-tour/>, respectively.

The market itself is located at the center of a square not unlike a shopping center to be seen in the United States. Image 5 below demonstrates where the market falls in relation to the rest of the town.

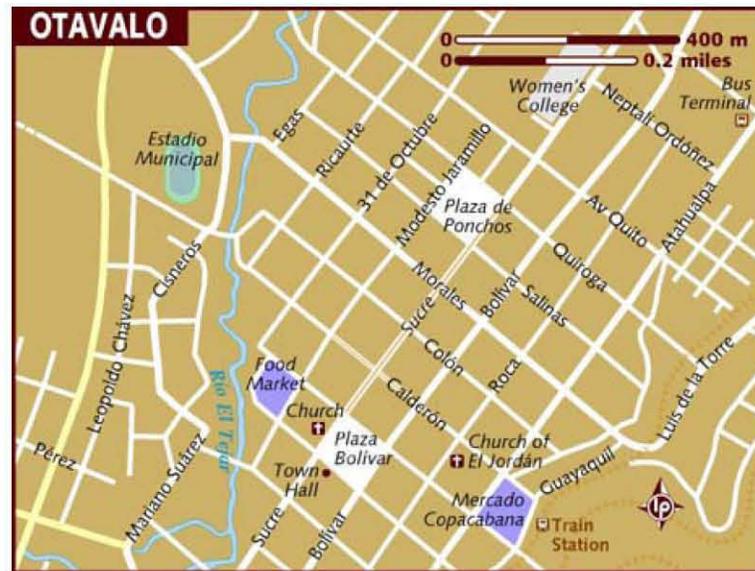


Image 5: Map of Otavalo proper, taken from <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/south-america/ecuador/otavalo/>

The outer streets are lined with unexpected treats; American expatriate-owned Shenandoah's Pie Shop serves up slices of apple, pumpkin, and lemon meringue pie; La Cosecha Coffee advertises artsy lattes and boasts the best wifi connection in town; music stores promulgate top quality electric guitars and amplifiers; and storefronts peddling designer textiles proudly write "Merry Christmas!" and "Black Friday Sale!" on their windows in a country that quite obviously does not recognize Thanksgiving (images 6 and 7).



Images 6 and 7: Merry Christmas display, advertisement for 25% off Black Friday sale in Otavalo taken in November 2017.

It is interesting to look at Otavalo and its market because while it is home to a Kichwa community that is largely ambivalent about continuing their language and culture, it is also home to these thriving and power-gaining language revitalization initiatives. One way that we can see the effect of these initiatives is by looking at the linguistic landscape of the Otavalo market and how it has changed over the last few years. Specifically, we can consider what languages are used in Plaza de ponchos signage, whether multilingualism is expressed, and how that multilingualism is used.

### **3. Methodology and Presentation of Data**

#### **3.1 Making Sense of the Data**

Using Google Street View I was able to virtually tour La Plaza de Ponchos as it existed in 2014 and capture street signs and store promotions from my computer. I then sorted the signs I found into four distinct categories depending on their linguistic qualities. In keeping with Cenoz & Gortern's (2006) methodology choice, I considered "each establishment... [as the] unit of analysis" as opposed to counting each sign present on a single establishment (71). I then consider my findings under the Markedness Model, as well as under lenses of three different Linguistic Landscape hypotheses: the Bourdieusard, presentation of self, and good reasons hypotheses. Later, I compare these findings with images gathered four years later in October 2018 to judge whether the landscape may be showing a shift in linguistic perception.

In organizing the data, I considered four distinct categories: Spanish Only, Spanish and English, Spanish and Kichwa, and English Only (Table 1).

<b>Spanish Only</b>	<b>Spanish and English</b>	<b>Spanish and Kichwa</b>	<b>English Only</b>
36 (73%)	7 (14%)	4 (8%)	2 (4%)

Table 1: Numerical breakdown of language usage on signs in Plaza de ponchos

80% of the signs were monolingual with the majority of those being Spanish Only. There is an overwhelming majority presence of Spanish Only signage in La Plaza de Ponchos with this category comprising 72% of the visible advertising space around the perimeter. 22% of the signs were bilingual with more than half of the bilingual signs being Spanish and English. Most of the signs are bottom-up advertisements, meaning they come from the community members and store owners. Conversely, top-down signs are signs put up by the municipality in the form of street signs, public notices, etc. (Antayo 2016: 28). At the time these images were taken, there was only one example of a top-down sign, which came in the form of a parking notice, shown in image 8.



Image 8: Parking notice sign on the perimeter of Plaza de ponchos taken from Google Satellite Images 2014<sup>1</sup>

Though the image is difficult to read, it is distinctively in Spanish. The fact that the only municipality-posted in this space is written solely in Spanish is very telling, as it is indicative of the lack of institutional support at the governmental level that Kichwa speakers are facing.

Looking at the bottom-up signage can tell us a lot more about the standing of Kichwa in the market because it directly reflects community attitudes and language perceptions. English

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<sup>1</sup> Images 8-15 are all taken from Google Satellite Street View, 2014.

Only signs accounted for only two out of the 50 signs considered, both of which are American expatriate owned establishment (images 9 and 10)



Image 9: American expatriate owned Shanandoa Pie Shop



Image 10: American expatriate owned Restaurant and Cafeteria

It is important to recognize exactly how English is used in cases of bilingual English/Spanish advertising. In Ovesdotter Alm's (2003: 149) landscape analysis of an Ecuadorian shopping mall, she concluded that "English [appears most frequently] in the category *incorporated words*. This category encompasses a typical embedded single item

word...compound word...proper nouns...and technical vocabulary” (149). This is consistent with La Plaza de Ponchos, as in most cases where English was used in bilingual cases, it was used in a very specific way, usually to connote a brand name like *Coca Cola* (image 11). In some examples, deciding whether or not to count a sign that had one or a few English words towards the English/Spanish count was tricky, such as in image 12 where English words appear to have been lexicalized into the Spanish language, such as technical words like “internet” and “chip.” For purposes of this study, I counted these types of signs towards the Spanish Only category, given that these words are essentially a part of the Spanish of this region, and not treated as English.



Image 11: Brand name signs for *Coca Cola* and *Whyte and Mackay Blended Scotch Whiskey*

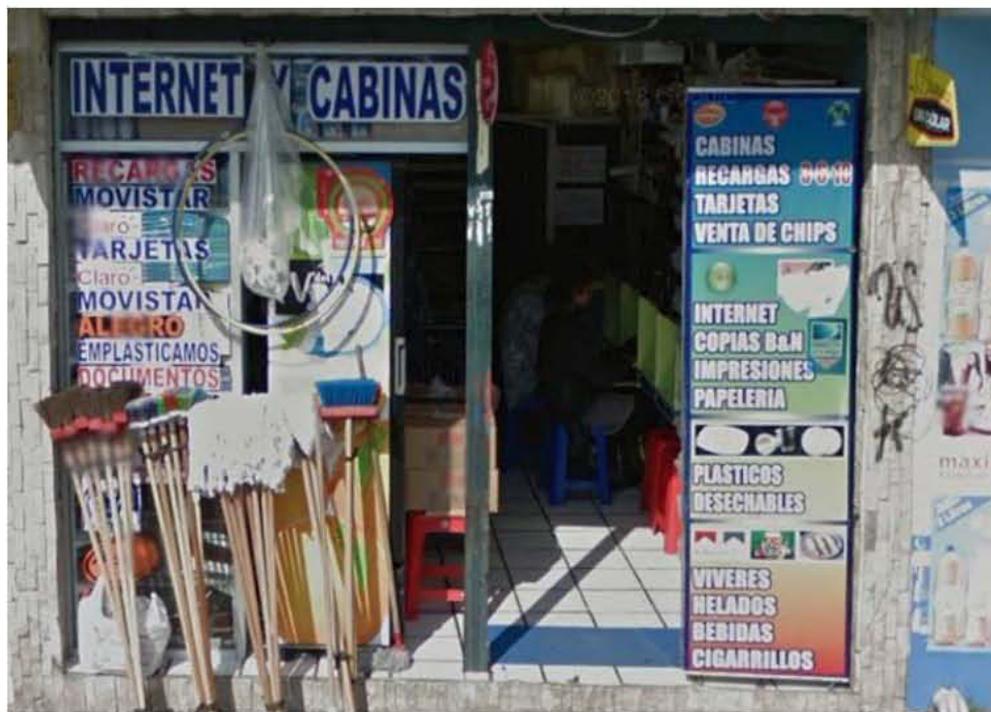


Image 12: Example of lexicalized English words (“internet” and chip”) used for technical description

Sometimes English was used in ways that native English speakers would find strange, as if they were thrown into the sign for no apparent reason. For example, *Libreria Forever 21* seems to

make a call to the popular US store Forever 21, yet this seems entirely out of context for a bookstore. Furthermore, *Damfi World Fashion* uses English that seems disjoint, though still gets the intended message across. (image 13).



Image 13: Signage for Libreria Papeleria Forever 21 and Damfi World Fashion

This is not surprising, nor is it an isolated case, of the phenomenon of borrowing English. Words in seemingly strange contexts occur across the world in countries as far from Ecuador as Friesland, Basque Country, and even Israel/Palestine (Cenoz and Gorter 2006: 72; Ben-Rafael et al. 2008: 18-20). Ecuadorians see English and western ideals as implications of linguistic prowess as a means of socioeconomic mobility. They see English as a language of power associated with capitalism, and they are not wrong (Crystal 2003). English is a global lingua franca that many aspire to gain; it is “an indicator of social dichotomies” (Ovesdotter Alm 2003: 155) whereby the English-speaking community, and the English language itself, is seen as superior. Foreign languages in advertising are often used to trigger people's emotion, not necessarily to convey an actual message about the product being sold (Weyers 2016: 10-12).

Foreign language associated with foreign products, and foreign products are an element of luxury.

When combined with the Markedness Model, we can understand why improper, or strange, English is used. The Markedness Model tells us that when viewing the language that one does not expect to see in a context the viewer processes the content of the message secondary to the language choice and is therefore “likely to focus attention on the language per se and trigger perceptions associated with it” (Kirshna and Ahluwalia 2008: 696). In an indigenous, primarily Spanish-speaking town, both tourists and locals likely would not expect to see English used in shop displays and the lack of expectancy has different effects on different individuals. For tourists who are English speakers, Kirshna and Ahluwalia (2008) argue that seeing English evokes feelings of home and familiarity, but for local Spanish speakers it triggers a sense of superiority and global belonging. By that model the English display effectively targets both English speakers and Spanish/Kichwa speakers by using English in its advertising choice.

However, the possibility remains that English-speaking tourists who see English in foreign advertisements might also consider it marked, given the context they are in. Kirshna and Ahluwalia’s study focuses mainly on non-native English speakers in India and does not account for tourist perception. To my knowledge, no literature exists evaluating language perceptions of native English-speaking tourists, and as such we must question how these people view English in foreign contexts. From my experience, my initial reaction towards English advertisements such as the aforementioned Black Friday window paint (image 7) and Danfi World Fashion (image 13) was one of humor and noticed displacement, as opposed to the argued “home and familiarity.”

In conversation with a friend from Otavalo, she mentioned that she noticed that there were many more uses of Kichwa in the streets surrounding the square as opposed to within the square itself. This could be taken to mean that the central square may be a space reserved for tourism and globalized languages where Kichwa does not have a space, but once you leave that square, Kichwa is acceptable. This is analogous to the general communal perception that Kichwa is a very insular language mainly reserved for use in the home, and not in public settings (Katz 2017). As such, even though Kichwa may be making strides and beginning to be integrated in the globalized field, there is still a marked separation between that space and the space where Kichwa is permitted to exist unopposed. This theory is certainly justified when considering how exactly Kichwa is displayed in the square. First and foremost, Kichwa is displayed in fewer than 1% of the signs counted, and it is always paired with Spanish. It never stands alone, as if to imply (perhaps not incorrectly) that Kichwa cannot exist without Spanish support. Additionally, we must consider the absence of Kichwa Only and Kichwa and English signage, indicating that Kichwa is not on the same level as English, and is not powerful enough to stand alone. Furthermore, of the four signs present, two of them are located on the very corners of the square and do not even reference a storefront inside the market perimeter. Images 14 and 15 show these signs pointing to stores **away** from the market perimeter.



Images 14 and 15: Kichwa signs pointing away from the market perimeter

### 3.2 Evaluation Under Existing Hypotheses

As noted in the section on Methods and Analysis, I evaluate the data presented above under three different hypotheses:

...the Bourdieusard hypothesis expects [Linguistic Landscape] configurations to be accounted for by power relations; the presentation-of-self hypothesis expects the multiplication of community markers where relevant communities do exist; the good-reasons hypothesis expects that benefit considerations explain [Linguistic Landscape] choices of [Linguistic Landscape] actors (Ben-Rafael et al. 2008: 16).

Interestingly, all three of these hypotheses are at play when considering the past and current linguistic landscape of La Plaza de Ponchos. Under the Bourdieusard hypothesis my findings are completely consistent. We would expect that the dominant language, Spanish, would be majority present, and that is exactly what we find. However, the presentation-of-self perspective would lead us to believe that we would find written Kichwa wherever Kichwa speakers were present. Logically, one would conclude that Otavalo would present much more Kichwa than it does. While it does not appear that my data supports this hypothesis, later discussion will affirm that a landscape shift towards the presentation-of-self hypothesis may be indicative of successful linguistic reclamation. Finally, the good-reasons hypothesis would posit that we would see English used as a targeted advertising language, which in fact we do.

However, the models taken at face-value may not be telling the entire story. The Bourdieusard hypothesis is perhaps the strongest theory in that Spanish is non-negotiably the most dominant language, but we must question the presentation of self and the good-reasons hypothesis, primarily on the basis of questioning the definition of “self.” Yes, the shopkeepers are largely of Kichwa decent, but the presentation of self hypothesis predicting majority-Kichwa signage does not account for a multidimensional self. They are Kichwa, but they are also

shopkeepers who have to make a living in a multi-linguistic model, while simultaneously they are still Spanish speakers. As such, can we attribute the presence of Spanish-majority signage to any one model? Spanish signage is a derivative of linguistic dominance, presentation of at least a part of the self, and certainly the good reason of wanting to advertise to a wide linguistic audience.

These findings are both comparable with and dissenting from previous literature. For example, Ben-Rafael et al. (2008) conducted a Linguistic Landscape study on Jewish, Israeli/Palestinian, and East Jerusalem communities. Although Israel is an extremely linguistically diverse community with languages spanning beyond Hebrew, Arabic, and English, the linguistic hierarchy is virtually the same as observed in Ecuador whereby English sits atop as a result of increased globalization, Hebrew straddles the middle as the dominant colonial language, and Palestinian Arabic receives “relatively low status” (13). Modern Hebrew as it is spoken to day was largely non-present in the region until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (11); therefore, Hebrew can be considered a dominant language comparable to how Spanish is used in Ecuador in the sense that both languages became present in a region after either never being present (Spanish) or absent for a long period of time (Hebrew) (Fellman, 1973).

Though Ben-Rafael et al. conducted a more complex analysis and included parameters different from my own, their findings are still comparable. In Jewish neighborhoods, Hebrew was expressed either with or without English in every case with an additional 50% English use and Arabic appearing less than 6% of the time; in Palestinian domiciles (East Jerusalem), Arabic is the predominant language with a large presence of English (appearing in 75% of signs) and virtually no Hebrew (16-17). When analyzing bottom-up signage as I did in my analysis, they found that Hebrew was unexpectedly dominant in both Jewish and Israeli/Palestinian locations,

the likes of which is surprising given that one would expect “resistance to majority language as a result of ongoing Jewish/Palestinian tensions within and outside of Israel” (22).

Here, the prediction proposed by the Bourdieusard hypothesis also holds true in that Arabic appears in lower numbers than the linguistically dominant language, Hebrew, as does the prediction proposed by the good-reasons hypothesis in that it the expected presence of English as a globally dominant language is in fact observed (24). On the same token as discussed with Kichwa, one would expect to see greater presence of Arabic where Arabs are present, which is not the case in Israeli-Palestinian neighborhoods though is the case in predominantly Arab neighborhoods such as East Jerusalem. This pattern is all too similar to the Kichwa-majority town of Otavalo.

Image analysis from 2014 Google Streetview also suggests that Kichwa does not have a place in the market space, despite it being such a vital part of indigenous culture and despite the majority of vendors in the market itself being of Kichwa heritage. No two linguistic environments are directly comparable, but these results are similar to those of Cenoz and Gorter (2006) whose framework I outlined in the Methodology and Presentation of Data section. They looked at language use on two streets, one in Friesland and one in Basque Country. In both instances they were studying the stance of minority languages, Friesian or Basque, respectively, as compared to the dominant Dutch or Spanish. While the minority language held a stronger presence in Basque Country than it does in Friesland, they found that “the use of English in commercial signs does not seem to be intended to transmit factual information but is used for its connotational value” in Friesland and the Basque Country, which is consistent with my findings (70). Furthermore, they find a marked difference in the presence of Basque as compared to the presence of Friesland whereby the former is present significantly more frequently (73). They

attribute the difference to the fact that Basque is much more widely used in written language, thus the pathway to using the language in signage was already established. Friesian, on the other hand, is much like Kichwa in the sense that it is not a thriving written language (Heimer-Bumstead 2017: 3). Perhaps then we can attribute the lack of Kichwa signage not directly to the standing of Kichwa as a language, but to the lack of orthographic support. However, this analysis is limited because Friesian does not carry the same discriminatory weight as Kichwa.

#### **4. Changing Tides and Takeaways**

The above analysis relies on data collected from Google Street View, which reportedly has not been updated since 2014. Importantly, images from October 2018 taken four years after these Google Sattelite images were captured show an increased use of bottom-up Kichwa in the market perimeter. As such, there may be an as-of-yet undocumented shift occurring.

Images 16 and 17 are examples of Kichwa on full display. Image 16 advertises a baby clothing store using Kichwa, Spanish, and English. The store is named “La casa de Jani.” Or “House of Jani” where “Jani” is a Kichwa name, but it is a “Kichwa-ized” name adapted from the English name Jonny. This sign shows a mixing of the three languages, but the Kichwa-ized name is front and center. So, while the name is still highly influenced by English, Kichwa is still placed in the attentional foreground. Furthermore, the English used is still an example of strangely incorporated English, which does not appear to make a difference in its perception as a linguistically superior language (Ovesdotter Alm 2003). In image 17, the advertiser opted for bold colors that grab the reader’s attention. *Machana* means “to protect” or “to shelter,” and so this sign advertises the café as a potential place of refuge. To associate Kichwa with a place of refuge as opposed to a tumultuous identity, whether done purposefully or not, has great social implications.



Images 16 and 17: Sign advertising a café in the Otavalo market square using Kichwa as principle messaging and Kichwa sign advertising baby clothing store, taken October 2018

Additionally, there is at least one more example of top-down signage, as shown in image 18, indicating there may be a stronger governmental initiative to employ Kichwa as a language equal to Spanish and English.



Image 18: Public bathroom sign written in all three languages, taken October 2018

This is interesting because of the lack of governmental support for Kichwa, and because it is located on a street corner that leads directly into the square as opposed to being more distant from it. Furthermore, it is not written at the bottom of the list but rather sandwiched between English and Spanish, where the English is misspelled. The fact that it is not on the bottom of the list helps give the perception that it is not at the bottom of the linguistic hierarchy.

These increased uses of Kichwa may be indicative of the landscape shifting more in favor of a presentation-of-self model, which in turn could be indicative of successful linguistic reclamation. Nonetheless, despite the increased presence of Kichwa, it does appear that English is still very much used as described by Cenoz & Gorter (2006: 72) and Ovesdotter Alm (2003: 149). Image 19 below shows examples of blatantly misused English, or at the very least English

that would sound out of place or completely wrong to a native English speaker, proudly on display in a storefront window. A series of three hats boast the words “California, New York,” “Lease Do Not,” and “Brooklyn: Urban Garment.”



Image 19: Examples of clothing with poorly written English on display, taken October 2018

There is much work to be done to begin to unpack the deeper meanings behind advertising language choice in La Plaza de Ponchos. While there is a very large body of research regarding ethnographic and anthropological studies, there is little to no Linguistic Landscape analysis in reference to Ecuador’s multilingual environment and certainly to Otavalo’s (Ovesdotter Alm, 2003). The methods employed in this study are rudimentary and there is certainly room for improvement. Following different Linguistic Landscape models of analysis could very well yield different results, as could a more thorough in-person investigation employing a stricter classification system such as that used in Ben-Rafael et al.’s (2008) study. Nonetheless, this research serves as an introduction to the potential that Linguistic Landscape

analysis holds to offer rich commentary on the status of Kichwa in Otavalo and in greater Ecuador.

It is precisely this in-progress commentary that serves as the main takeaway for this analysis. Clearly, there is a shift in linguistic attitudes in Otavalo, and possibly greater Ecuador, that not only is not captured by recent literature, but is also unaccounted for by modern tools such as Google Street View. While major cities such as Shanghai, China and Manhattan, New York have been updated in 2018, other globally significant cities such as areas in Paris, France (particularly surrounding the Eifel Tower) have not been documented in almost a decade. Certainly, this landscape, much like Otavalo's, has changed dramatically over time. The rift between available Google-captured images and images taken closer to present-day demonstrates just how quickly language attitudes can change, and how important it is that we as culturally conscious academics pay attention to the changing tides around us.

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